



# 3 *step*

advice to keep your  
home safe from burglars



**Prevent Crime.**  
**Put Off Criminals.**  
Protect Your Home.

## Keep your home safe

Burglars are often opportunistic thieves who prey on houses and flats. They seek out any opening that they can take advantage of, specifically doors and windows that are left open or unlocked or are easy to force.

Anything of value that they might spot through a window will only spur them on. But it really doesn't take much to deter these thieves – just smart thinking.

Follow our three-step advice in this booklet to keep your home safe from burglary and damage.



Step 1:  
*Valuables*



Step 2:  
*Buildings*



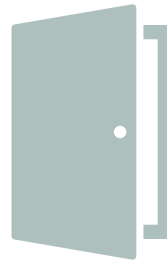
Step 3:  
*Outside*

## Burglar facts



Burglars target homes that they think will contain valuables. A sure giveaway is leaving packaging from expensive items outside your front door

Burglars often look for homes with windows or doors left open or with vulnerable features that they can exploit.



Burglars are aware of the times when someone is expected to be away from their house such as during the school run or holidays

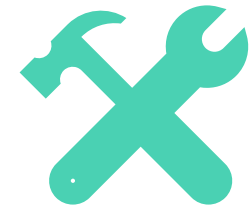


Burglars often choose a home because they've spotted a specific vehicle, motorcycle or bicycle they want to steal – and the keys are more than likely to be inside the residence



Burglars typically do not want to be seen or heard and if they feel that they would be noticed by a neighbour or passerby then they are more likely to feel exposed and may move on to find somewhere else to burgle

Sheds and garages are often vulnerable as they are not always secure and contain tools which the burglar can use to assist them to gain entry to a home



It's a fact that many burglars return to homes that they've previously burgled because the homeowner failed to upgrade security following the first burglary. They sometimes return to an area to try to burgle a nearby home that they spotted while committing a previous break in. Even more reason for you to ensure you keep your home as safe as houses

# 1 Step 1: Valuables

## Keep it safe

If you have high value items such as jewellery, watches, passports, credit cards, computer data and identification documents, you may want to consider storing them in a safe.

There are two options – either a home safe or a safety deposit vault.

- If you opt for a safe in your home, make sure it's fire rated. Home safes are also insurance rated according to the type and value of items designed to be kept inside, so check with your insurance company first to make sure you're adequately covered.
- Position the safe carefully so it won't be easily discovered. Don't put it in your bedroom as this is the first place a burglar will look.
- Make sure you bolt your safe to a wall or floor.
- If you have a large amount of family gold or jewellery, consider using a safety deposit vault. This removes the risk of storing valuables in your own home and can also make your home less of a target to burglars.
- Contact your insurance company should you opt for this, as it may affect your current policy and premium.
- The National Pawnbrokers Association can give you more information about safety deposit vaults in your area. Visit [www.thenpa.com](http://www.thenpa.com)



## Mark your property

A determined burglar can be difficult to discourage. Good-quality doors, windows and locks are excellent deterrents, but there's even more you can do to stop burglars in their tracks.

### Mark it

Make your valuables less attractive to thieves by using a property or police approved forensic marking solution only visible under Ultraviolet (UV) light. This can take the form of a special marker using ink or paint.

North Yorkshire Police also offers free 'dot peen' property marking to anyone in North Yorkshire. Dot peen marking involves using a tungsten carbide-tipped pin to indent an object with dots to create a visible, permanent unique number. It can be used on everything from steel and aluminium to plastic. Contact your local police team to find out more about this service or visit [www.northyorkshire.police.uk/homesecurity](http://www.northyorkshire.police.uk/homesecurity)

All of these measures help police identify stolen goods, making it harder for thieves to sell.

### Join your Neighbourhood Watch

By becoming part of your local Neighbourhood Watch, you'll be joining other like-minded neighbours who, by keeping their eyes and ears open, help to keep potential criminals out of the area. Visit [www.ourwatch.org.uk](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk)

### Record it

Register your valuables using an accredited property database. Take photographs and keep documents like receipts related to your property so you can prove ownership.

### Register your bike

Register your bike with Bike Register. The prominent stamp acts as a great deterrent. Visit [www.bikeregister.com](http://www.bikeregister.com)

### Flag it

Mark your property as protected. Window stickers and signage are extremely effective and are proven to be a powerful deterrent against burglary.

## 2 Step 2: Buildings

### Control access to all areas

Your home is only as secure as its weakest point of entry. That's why it's so important to have doors and windows that are as secure as possible.

In this section you'll find lots of advice on how to keep potential burglars out.

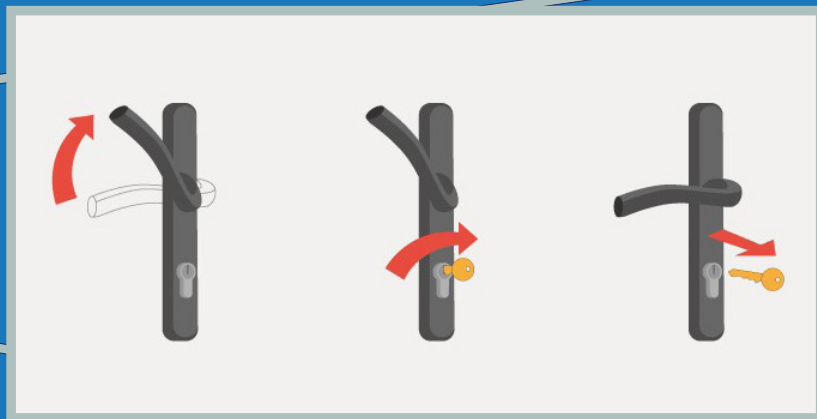
### Double secure

Simply shutting the door won't prevent burglaries. Double-lock the door every single time you leave the house.

latches to secure the door but these only work if you lift up the handle and then remember to turn and remove the key. Remember:

Modern multi-locking and uPVC doors use a system of hooks and

*Lift, lock and remove*



## Control access with doors you can trust

You need a front door that is solid and strong enough to withstand even the most determined burglar. Whether you live in a flat or a house, your front door will always tell a thief the levels of security surrounding your home. If it looks really secure and burglar-resistant, then they'll think twice about trying to gain entry.

A locksmith belonging to the Master Locksmiths Association will check to see if your door is secure and made of solid timber or a robust composite. The locksmith can also reinforce the frame and check if the locks and hinges are British Standard approved.

If you are putting in a new front door, always fit security accredited products as these are tested to British standards and approved by the insurance industry. Talk to your locksmith about standard PAS 24 2016.

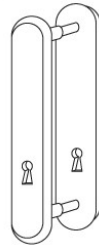
### Patio doors

Sliding patio doors are vulnerable to forced entry, so do check that yours have an anti-lift device fitted so they can't be lifted out of the frame. Some uPVC doors are fitted with locks that protrude from the frame on the outside (euro profile locks). If yours do, then consider getting a Master Locksmiths Association member to change the lock to a shorter one that can't be snapped off.

Visit [www.locksmiths.co.uk](http://www.locksmiths.co.uk) for more info.

1. If your door has a letterbox, a guard fitted to the rear of the door will prevent someone reaching in with a stick and a hook to fish for any nearby items such as a handbag or keys – which should never be kept near exterior doors. Consider cat and dog flaps too.

7. A lockguard does exactly that; it protects the keyhole and lock from being tampered with and is a great deterrent.



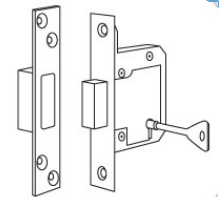
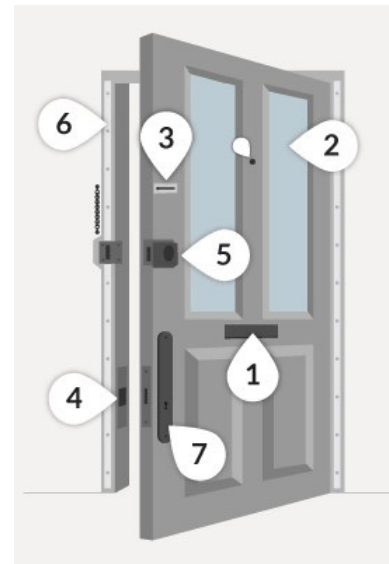
2. Windows in doors can be reinforced by using special film or by installing laminated panels.

3. Spy holes and security chains are recommended so that anyone visiting can be identified before you open the door.

4. Always remember to use both locks and check to make sure that the mortice lock is double-locked every time you leave your home.

6. Door bars, such as a London Bar or Birmingham Bar greatly reinforce the doorframe and provide excellent protection against anyone trying to force a door open or kicking it down.

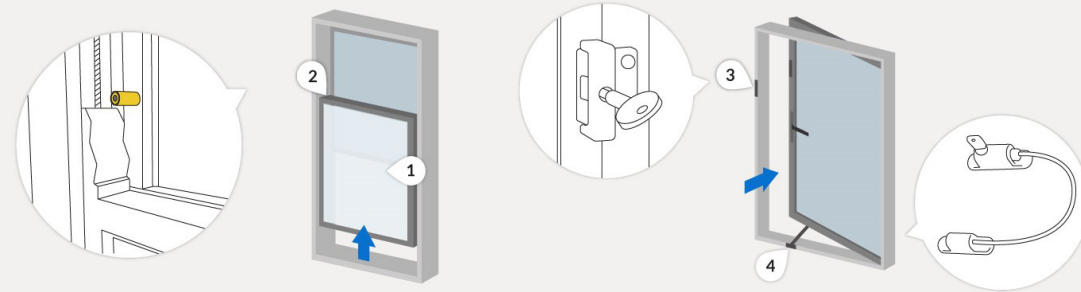
5. A simple turn of a double-locking nightlatch gives you added security and peace of mind.





## Prevent access through your windows

Burglars tend to target windows as they generally offer easier access than doors. Take a good look at your windows from the outside and remove potential access points where you can. Are there walls, bins or garden furniture that could be used to reach windows? For windows that are within reaching distance such as ground floors, see our tips below.



/// Laminated glass or security film is recommended for ground floor and accessible windows.



/// Sash stops prevent anyone opening the sash window enough to climb through.



/// Key operated locks are recommended for window types that open out, rather than up, and any ground floor or accessible windows. Remember, window locks are only effective if used, so check that you have locked them before you leave home or go to bed.



/// Window opening restrictors allow you to ventilate your home but make sure they can't be picked and unlocked from outside.



If you're replacing your windows, always consider a security accredited product as these windows are tested to British standards and are insurance approved. A good standard is PAS 24 2016.

# 3 Step 3: Outside

Burglars don't want to be seen or heard and if they think they'll be noticed by a neighbour or passer-by, they'll probably move on. Here's some on helping keep burglars out by giving them no hiding place.

### Security light

Install an outside security light so that intruders can't approach without being seen.

### Gravel driveway and path

Gravel driveways and paths will help you to hear anyone approach and make it harder for burglars to go undetected.

### Low front boundary

Keep hedges and walls at the front of your house low (under one metre) so burglars have nowhere to hide.

### Extra steps you can take

Consider buying a shed alarm. These are usually quite cheap but still effective. Add an extra layer of protection to shed windows with laminate sheets of film or internal metal grills.

### Secure your shed

Always keep your shed locked and secured, and make sure it is anchored down to prevent it from being lifted in order to gain access. Often sheds contain valuables such as power tools and bicycles.

### Never leave tools lying around

Never leave tools lying around as they can be used as a way of breaking into your home.

### High side and rear boundaries

At the rear and sides, taller fencing, walls and hedges are recommended (over 1.8 metres) to prevent easy access. Add lightweight trellis to gates and fences and plant some prickly plants to make it harder for burglars to climb over.

### Intruder alarm system

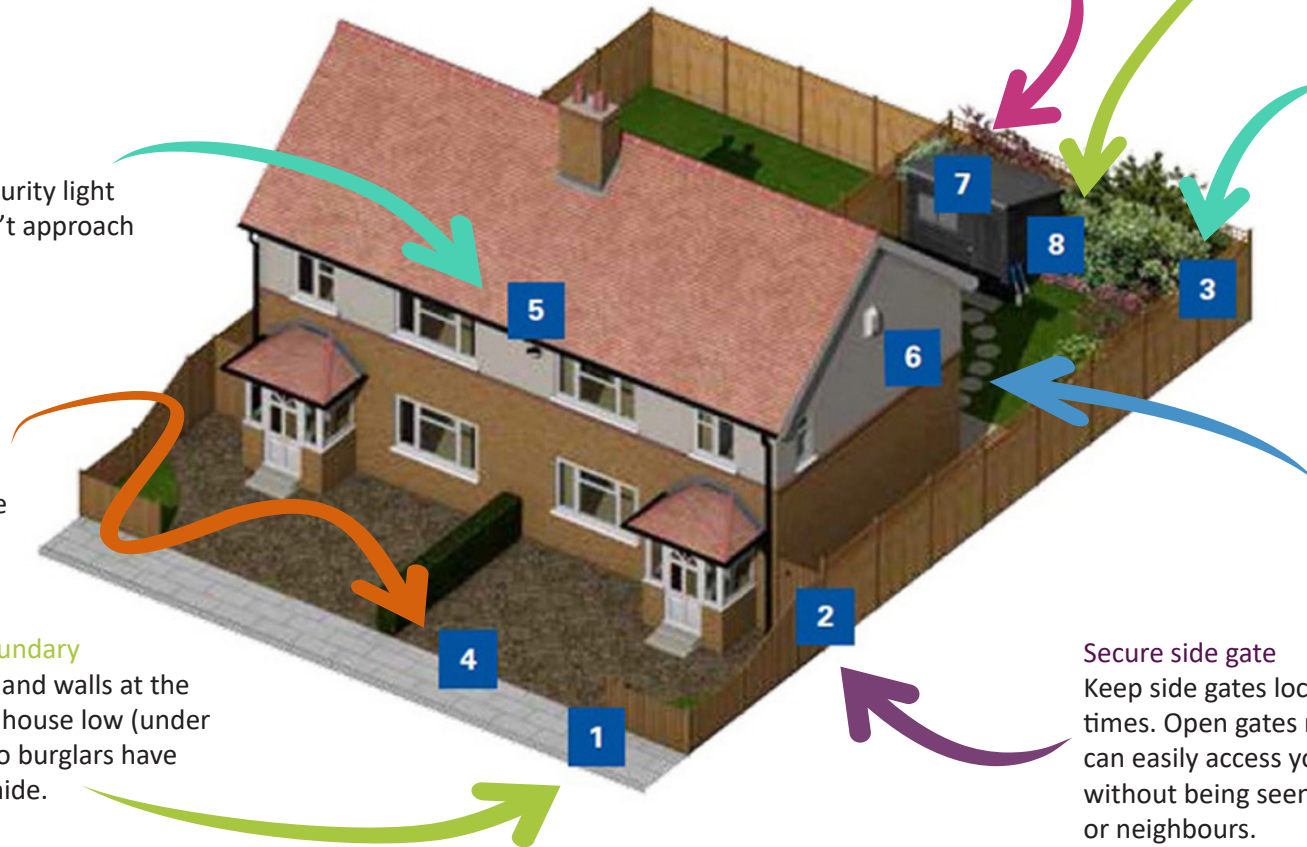
Install a burglar alarm system.

### Secure side gate

Keep side gates locked at all times. Open gates mean burglars can easily access your home without being seen by passers-by or neighbours.

### Create a natural defence against burglary

Planting particular shrubs (in their mature or semi mature form) along garden walls and fences can make it harder for burglars to access your property or put them off completely. To maximise this effect plant them close to each other.



# Other ways to make it difficult for burglars

## CCTV

By using well-defined boundaries as a basis, CCTV can be a valuable tool. However, it doesn't prevent a crime from being committed and does have limitations. Most importantly, CCTV is no substitute for good quality physical security such as secure doors and windows.



- A wide range of cameras are available, from traditional CCTV systems recording 24/7 to video doorbell cameras that activate on approach.
- Some cameras work by day and by night, and record when they detect movement. Some can be remotely viewed from a smartphone.
- Audio capability is available in some, to allow you to speak to any caller - welcome or unwelcome.
- Position cameras where they are best able to obtain good quality facial images. Could you recognise or identify someone from the footage?
- There is legislation for home CCTV use, so always seek advice from an accredited installer first to ensure your system complies with the law.
- Place signage up warning that CCTV is in use.

### *Did you know?*

Video doorbell cameras can now be purchased for less than £100.

## Alarms

Consider an accredited burglar alarm system with audible alarm boxes mounted high at the front and rear of your home. Two visible audible alarm boxes are better than one. Mount them at the front and rear of your home, high up to resist tampering.

There are three types of burglar alarm, varying in capability and cost:



### **Monitored**

Once triggered, an alarm company or designated key holder can check to ensure it isn't a false alarm.



### **Unmonitored**

This type, once activated, will sound a loud alarm designed to scare off an intruder and alert neighbours but they are reliant on someone such as a neighbour checking the house.



### **Auto Dialler**

This system, once activated, alerts pre-programmed key holders with either a text or a phone call.

The police will typically respond to a burglar alarm if requested to do so by a monitoring company but are less likely to respond to an unmonitored alarm.

If you have an extension to your home remember to extend your burglar alarm coverage as well.

Signage is an effective deterrent if used with an active alarm system.

### *For advice and approved suppliers of CCTV and alarms*

Visit the National Security Inspectorate ([www.nsi.org.uk](http://www.nsi.org.uk)) and the Security Systems and Alarms Inspection Board ([www.ssaib.org](http://www.ssaib.org)).



## Lighting

### External lighting

- Lighting is a good deterrent and is recommended at doors as it makes it safer for you when coming and going after dark.
- A clear, low white light that activates at dusk to dawn is ideal for lighting a yard and garden and allowing any person to be clearly seen.
- Check to make sure that trees and plants do not obscure your lighting. It's recommended that you regularly cut vegetation back.
- Take care to position these lights so that light pollution doesn't annoy your neighbours.

### Internal lighting

- Use an automatic plug-in time-switch to operate a lamp or light at pre-set times when you're away.
- Energy saving LED bulbs are best as they do not use as much electricity, last longer than conventional bulbs and do not generate heat, reducing fire risk.
- In blocks of flats, automatic low-energy lights that detect movement are recommended for corridors, stairwells and communal areas such as car parks and cycle stores.



## Leaving your home checklist

Whenever you go out, it's important to leave your home secure. Getting into an 'exit routine' can help ensure that you don't forget obvious, but important things, like not leaving your valuables near windows, or no lights on if it will be dark before you get home.

Try to get into the habit of following your own course of action when you lock up your home. This will ensure that you don't forget anything.

Here's our quick reminder on what to do just before you go out:

- ✓ Close and lock all your doors and windows, even if you're only going out for a few minutes
- ✓ Double-lock any door
- ✓ Make sure that any valuables are out of sight
- ✓ Keep handbags away from the letterbox or cat flap and hide all keys including car keys, as a thief could hook keys or valuables through even a small opening
- ✓ Never leave car documents or id in obvious places such as kitchens or hallways
- ✓ In the evening, shut the curtains and leave lights on
- ✓ If you're out all day, then it's advisable to use a timer device to automatically turn lights and a radio on at night
- ✓ Set your burglar alarm
- ✓ Make sure the side gate is locked
- ✓ Lock your shed or garage
- ✓ Lock your bike inside a secure shed or garage, to a robust fitting bolted to the ground or wall, like a ground anchor

### Going away?

Don't forget to cancel newspaper and milk deliveries before you go, leave lights and a radio on a timer to make the property appear occupied, and ask someone you trust to keep an eye on your property.

# Things to look out for

## Bogus callers and distraction burglary

Most people who call at your home will be genuine. But sometimes, people turn up unannounced, with the intention of tricking their way into your home. They are known as 'bogus callers' or 'distraction burglars', whose only aim is to get into your home by distracting you to steal money or valuables.

Bogus callers sometimes work in pairs or even teams and are often well organised. One will distract you while the other searches the house for money or other valuables. They can be men, women or children (or often a combination). Watch out for anyone who says they are in a hurry.

Don't let them pressure or confuse you.

Bogus callers may pose as water, electricity or gasboard workers, council workers, charity workers or even police officers. Always ask the caller for their identification, and check it, before letting them in.

Use the phone number in the phone book, not the one on their identity card. Remember, a genuine caller will happily wait outside while you check on them by calling their organisation and or calling a family member or neighbour.

To reduce the risk of becoming a victim of this crime, remember the following four steps:

- LOCK** Lock all doors – even when you are at home
- STOP** Stop - before you open the door, ask them who they are
- CHAIN** Chain – always use a door chain or spy hole
- CHECK** Check – Not sure who they are? Don't open the door!



## 2-in-1 burglars

A car key burglary, or 2-in-1 burglary as they are sometimes known, is where a criminal breaks into your home with the specific aim of removing your car keys and stealing your car.

Perpetrators will often target the owners of high-value vehicles; 'cruising' around residential areas looking for opportunities to exploit their security and get to their keys.

Whilst burglaries of this nature are uncommon in North Yorkshire, it is important that vehicle and home owners take simple prevention methods to deter potential thieves. The more difficult you make it for them; the less likely they are to bother. Here are seven tips to help protect both your car and home.

- 1** Use your garage – if you have a garage or outbuilding, please use it and lock your car away when not in use.
- 2** If you don't have a garage, consider fitting sturdy and lockable gates or a security post to your driveway.
- 3** Fit a high quality alarm, immobiliser or tracking device to your car if finances allow. Alternatively, use a device such as a visible steering or wheel locks.
- 4** Always lock your car and make sure doors, windows, the boot and sunroof are secure whenever you leave your vehicle.
- 5** If you own more than one vehicle, park the lesser valued vehicle to block in the more expensive one, making it more difficult to remove.
- 6** Don't leave your car keys on view or placed near windows, doors or cat-flaps where thieves can see them; criminals can easily take keys from kitchen work-tops, tables and hooks on walls and exploit keyless entry cars.
- 7** Look out for your neighbours and report anything suspicious in your area.



# If you have been burgled



Ring 999 if you believe the offender is still in your home or has just run away; if not use the 101 number. You will be given a crime number to quote in an insurance claim, or if you want to contact police with any follow-up queries.

Try to preserve the crime scene for any forensic evidence that may be of use to the police. If possible, do not touch anything or allow your children or pets into the same rooms that the burglar has been in.

## For more advice



Visit: [northyorkshire.police.uk/homesecurity](https://northyorkshire.police.uk/homesecurity)

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